

The Story of Dhul-Qarnayn: A King of the World

Islamic Stories - Volume 8

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Chapter 1: Rise of a Ruler

Origins: A Roman Youth with Divine Favour

Dhul-Qarnayn was a Roman boy to whom Allah Almighty granted sovereignty. Empowered by divine will, he began his journey as a ruler destined to shape history.

The Founding of Alexandria:

His travels led him to the coasts of Egypt, where he founded a city and named it Alexandria. This act marked a significant early accomplishment in his expanding rule.

Divine Encounter: A Heavenly Perspective

When his task was complete, an angel descended to him and initiated a celestial dialogue, prompting Dhul-Qarnayn to observe the earth from different heights.

The Vision from Above:

Angel:

“Look towards the earth and tell me what you see.”

Dhul-Qarnayn looked and observed various cities scattered across the land. The angel ascended with him further and repeated the question.

Angel:

“Now look again; what do you see?”

Dhul-Qarnayn:

“I see my city mingled among others; I cannot distinguish it.”

The angel elevated him once more and asked again.

Angel:

“Now look; what do you see?”

Dhul-Qarnayn:

“Now I see only my city.”

Angel:

**“All of this, and whatever surrounds it, is the sea.
Allah Almighty has appointed you the sovereign over
it.”**

Chapter 2: The Journey of Exploration

The Western Horizon: Maghrib al-Shams

Dhul-Qarnayn undertook a grand expedition across the earth. Eventually, he reached the place known as Maghrib al-Shams—the western edge where the sun sets.

The Eastern Dawn: Maghrib al-Shams

From the west, he continued his journey to the east, arriving at Maghrib al-Shams—the point of sunrise. His exploration thus spanned the geographical extremes of the known world.

The Barrier of the Two Mountains: Between the Walls

Continuing onward, he reached a region between two mountains, referred to as Saddayn—a land marked by natural walls. These twin peaks signified another pivotal stage in his journey and governance.

Chapter 3: The Barrier and Beyond

The Malleable Mountains: A Mysterious Terrain

The two mountains that Dhul-Qarnayn encountered were of such a soft nature that anything making contact with them would adhere to their surface. It was at this location that he constructed a wall, thereby isolating the tribes of Yajuj and Majuj from the rest of creation.

The Dog-Faced Nation: Conflict and Separation

Subsequently, Dhul-Qarnayn came upon a nation whose facial features resembled those of dogs. These people were engaged in battle against the tribes of Yajuj and Majuj. Accordingly, he separated them from each other as well, continuing his mission of order and distinction.

A Cannibalistic People and a Great Desert:

His journey then led him to a people who consumed one another. He also encountered a vast desert, barren and expansive in its silence. The path eventually took him to a land situated on the edge of the encircling ocean—Bahr-e-Muheet.

The People of the Book Bear Witness:

People of the Book:

“We bear witness that whatever you have stated concerning Dhul-Qarnayn is exactly what is mentioned in our scriptures.”

Chapter 4: A Righteous Society

A Model Community: Principles in Practice

Having completed the construction of Alexandria, Dhul-Qarnayn resumed his travels. He came across a righteous people who were firmly committed to the path of truth. Their conduct and social order were marked by exemplary moral qualities and balance.

Their daily lives were governed by justice, equal distribution of resources, fair adjudication, and acts of kinship. Their graves lay before their homes, which remained unlocked. There were neither rulers nor judges among them, no distinctions of status, no quarrels or disputes, no abusive language or loud laughter, no sorrow or grief. They were free from natural calamities, enjoyed long lives, and among them were neither the destitute nor the poor.

A Ruler's Reflection:

Dhul-Qarnayn:

“Inform me about your conditions, for I have travelled the entire world, journeyed across seas and lands, yet I have never seen a people as righteous as you.”

A Representative's Response:

Representative:

“Ask whatever you wish; I shall answer each of your questions.”

Chapter 5: Virtue and Harmony:

A Question of Practices: Dhul-Qarnayn's Inquiry

Upon encountering this righteous people, Dhul-Qarnayn sought to understand their way of life, which seemed in stark contrast to the complexities of the world he had observed during his travels. His questions were direct and insightful, and the responses from the representatives of this society revealed their unique way of living, shaped by principles of simplicity and moral integrity.

The Graves Before the Doors:

Dhul-Qarnayn:

“Why are your graves located before the doors of your homes?”

Representative:

“We have intentionally done this so that we do not forget death. We wish to keep its memory alive in our hearts at all times.”

Unlocked Doors and Trust:

Dhul-Qarnayn:

“Why are your doors not locked?”

Representative:

“There is no need to lock our doors, for none of us are suspicious of one another. We trust each other implicitly.”

The Absence of Rulers:

Dhul-Qarnayn:

“Why are there no rulers among you?”

Representative:

“We do not require rulers, as we do not engage in conflict that would necessitate governance.”

Wealth and Power:

Dhul-Qarnayn:

“Why are there no wealthy individuals among you?”

Representative:

“We do not have an abundance of wealth. Our lives are simple and content.”

Dhul-Qarnayn:

“Why are there no kings in your land?”

Representative:

“None among us is interested in worldly power or dominion. We seek no earthly kingship.”

The Absence of Pride and Division:

Dhul-Qarnayn:

“Why are there no nobles or elites among you?”

Representative:

“We have no need for such distinctions, for pride does not exist among us.”

Dhul-Qarnayn:

“Why are there no conflicts among you?”

Representative:

“Because we value peace above all. Harmony and reconciliation are the cornerstones of our society.”

Dhul-Qarnayn:

“Why are there no disputes over peace among you?”

Representative:

“Our society is built on mutual respect and the desire for peace, which prevents any such disputes from arising.”

Chapter 6: Faith and Tradition

Protection from Calamities:

As Dhul-Qarnayn continued his discourse with the representative of the righteous people, his curiosity led him to inquire about the apparent absence of afflictions in their lives. He was intrigued by how their community seemed untouched by the calamities that often befell other societies.

Trust in God Alone:

Dhul-Qarnayn:

“Why is it that you do not face the calamities that others encounter?”

Representative:

“Because we place our trust solely in Allah and do not rely on anyone or anything else, such as astrology or superstitions.”

The Legacy of Ancestors:

Dhul-Qarnayn, eager to understand the roots of their virtuous conduct, asked the representative to recount the story of their ancestors. The representative shared the noble characteristics of their forebears, describing how they upheld righteousness and justice in their communities.

The Virtue of the Forebears:

Dhul-Qarnayn:

“Tell me about your forefathers. How were they?”

Representative:

“Our forefathers were virtuous individuals. They showed mercy to the poor and cared for the needy among them. They dealt with those who wronged them with patience and maintained strong family ties. They safeguarded their prayers and honored their promises. This is why Allah blessed their efforts and kept them protected from calamities as long as they lived. Allah has kept us, their descendants, on the same righteous path.”

The Departure of Dhul-Qarnayn:

Upon hearing the account of the people's virtuous life and their trust in divine providence, Dhul-Qarnayn, although moved, expressed his inability to stay with them. He acknowledged the divine command that guided his journey.

A Reluctant Farewell:

Dhul-Qarnayn:

“If it were not for the command of Allah, I would have stayed with you, but I am unable to remain here. I am bound by His will.”